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Kazakhstan Defense Representatives visit NPS

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Article by Maggie Spivey

Representatives from the Kazakhstan Ministry of Defense and National Defense University (NDU) visited the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), the designated U.S. Partnership for Peace Training and Education Center (USPTC), the week of 3-8 July to participate in a faculty exchange between NPS and NDU.

Both NPS and the U.S. Navy Central Command sponsored the visit in support of defense institution building objectives. Upon their request, the Kazakhstan defense representatives were provided information related to the U.S. military education system, the different curricula offered at NPS, and how NPS postgraduate and doctoral degrees are developed, as Kazakhstan looks to expand its military education structure and degrees offered at NDU.

"We have been expanding the types of activities in the [National Defense] University," stated Col. Nurlan Kozhabekov, NDU Deputy Commandant for Scientific Works, Chief of the Research Center. "We have been doing certain works in international cooperation. To enlarge this international cooperation, we arranged a visit to this respectful University in the hope that those international cooperation plans will be strengthened."

The NDU came into being in August 2003 when the Kazakhstan President reorganized the country's military academy into the NDU. Today, NDU instructs Armed Forces officers on programs of higher professional education on the following specialties: military and state management; military and administrative management; technical provision management; logistics management; moral and welfare management; military education management.

"If we have the opportunity to expand our relations, we will have the possibility to establish a PhD program," stated Col. Bakyt Kossynbayev, NDU Deputy Commandant for Academic Affairs, Chief of Curriculum Department. To provide more information on this topic, Dr. Douglas Moses, Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, met with the group twice regarding the development of masters and PhD degrees.

To highlight ways that NPS utilizes innovation and education technologies in its curriculum, the group also met with Mr. Tom Mastre, Director of the Center for Educational Design, Development, and Distribution. Cdr. Kevin Maher, Military Faculty with the Graduate School of Operational and Information Science (GSOIS), also provided an in-depth look into the development of an advanced distributed learning degree, having recently put together the Masters in Cost Estimating and Analysis program.

"Our main aim is to be at the same level with NPS, not to lag behind," said Col. Andrey Moldabayev, NDU Chief of the Humanities Department. To ensure the visitors received a good overview of NPS' capabilities, they also had meetings with representatives from all four NPS graduate schools, the Center for Civil-Military Relations, and the Defense Resources Management Institute. They also had the opportunity to tour a variety of labs, including the TNT lab with Dr. Alex Bordetsky, Associate Professor with GSOIS, and the Small Satellite lab with Mr. Daniel Sakoda, Research Associate with the Graduate School of Engineering and Applied Sciences.

In order to continue the exchange and efforts begun during this visit, NPS faculty and staff will make the trip to NDU in Almaty, Kazakhstan, in early September. "We also hope to see NPS representatives in our NDU," affirmed Kossynbayev. "We hope that the results of this visit will be practically applicable, and we can see the fruits of our joint work."

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Photo credit: Javier Chagoya

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